

**map of the hydrogen world**

**poems and epistles**

**steve halle**

“From a physical perspective, humans are water. When I realized this and started to look at the world from this perspective, I began to see things in a whole new way. [...] I realized that this connection to water applies to all peoples.”

--Masaru Emoto

“woman seated in the arc of the wind,  
a body more remote than the atom,  
a point hurrying in the space of numbers.  
a thigh in the sky and a thigh in the water,  
Say: where is your star? The battle between the grass and the computers is imminent”

--Adonis

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to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade john who liked motorcycles

*for Roy Nathanson*

john who liked motorcycles did it *again*,  
wet his pants *again* (i found out later  
he had a catheter) the other boys smelled  
it and shot insults from across the classroom  
like “hey pissy boy” or “smells like a urinal  
in here” i sat next to john so i smelled  
piss too but i didn’t mind so much  
i talked to John and he laughed  
so i knew he hadn’t heard the other guys  
yet but my nostrils were giving out  
and i couldn’t breathe for the urine  
but i’ve got to keep talking  
but i’m running out of things to say!  
i fake it i tell jokes quote movies anything—  
gibberish voices vaudeville  
john’s laughing harder now and the asshole  
boys disappear blurring  
into their desks until all i can hear  
is my own voice speaking in tongues  
and John roaring, reeking of piss.  
it was my first poem.

materiality

linseed

oil

on

canvas

Gothic Revival in the late afternoons  
dissolves in fiery sunsets

Monet gone Spain,  
a dozen variations

*CHRIST CHILD*

Vertheuil. 1878-1881

“a piece of paint  
off Rousseau’s painting  
in the Louvre”

*LINSEED OIL*

I  
N  
K

TONGUE

T  
O  
U  
C  
H

oil on canvas & first motorcar, chauffeur

INTHETEMPLE

**real child-finger allowed by mother to touch renaissance picture of crucifixion and i horrified as if this transgression, by the babe, the christ child himself possibly come again b/c who can recognize the form anyway? as if he might nullify it completely and in my mind the painting might be the closest i can get to crucifixion in the pain of thinking and re-imagining the killing the material linseed oil on canvas the closest physical embodiment of a certain transcendent moment. then i remember the curiosity of the boy’s finger and “Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid *his* hands on them, and departed thence.” and the boy touched the painting again and again. in my mind i wasn’t angry anymore.**

on of Song—nudes, poses, stylized

shame animation line  
Rodin’s *Adam*  
distortions.

eyeless, so there can be no tears  
lines returning, offered, sacred.

**suffer little children**

S  
U  
F  
F  
E  
R

Flank the Gates of Hell!

cardboard woven tarot mechanism die-cut oil cloth shallow grave element pen.

She is porcelain & commercially printed, sandpaper & black crayon tan wove.

Andre Breton

omnibus aux trains et bateaux.

agrandissements considerables.

wood slat postage stamp

**SAND**

Auriaga Constellation

ivory on watercolor graphite crayon

smudging erasure scraping

contribute to the Anxious Fund for maximum benefits

Gouache crea

**SAND**

Ceci N'est pas une pipe, Rene

sun stare spot stare banquet stare stair stare

corrugated Pablo cardboard

mantra sin asunder patriarchal

mounted Netherlands Americana to

American kickme Kaiser greyed & grave

excavalier catheda infallibles

**SAND**

duct tape snelving cane exacto webbing Styrofoam aut

and say teenage honey grows teen 24

**SAND**

T  
R  
A  
N  
S  
G  
R  
E  
S  
S

Nadja whispered,  
"nothing here,  
leave it, blank,  
uncharted."

**SAND**

**PAPER**

*A THIN, FLAT MATERIAL  
PRODUCED BY THE COMPRESSION  
OF FIBERS*

papyrus

ancient Egyptian writing  
material

**Cai Lun**

*HOW TO MAKE  
IT?*

true paper had been excavated in China

the key element in global cultural  
advancement

LETTERS CEASED

*acid-free*

*20 lb.*

*90 bright*

*heaven?*

"Now imagine a mountain of that sand, a million miles high, reaching from the earth to the farthest heavens, and a million miles broad, extending to remotest space, and a million miles in thickness: and imagine such an enormous mass of countless particles of sand multiplied as often as there are leaves in the forest, drops of water in the mighty ocean, feathers on birds, scales on fish, hairs on animals, atoms in the vast expanse of the air: and imagine that at the end of every million years a little bird came to that mountain and carried away in its beak a tiny grain of that sand. How many millions upon millions of centuries would pass before that bird had carried away even a square foot of that mountain, how many eons upon eons of ages before it had carried away all. yet at the end of that immense stretch of time not even one instant of eternity could be said to have ended. at the end of all those billions and trillions of years eternity would have scarcely begun. and if the mountain rose again after it had been all carried away and if the bird came again and carried it all away again grain by grain: and if it so rose and sank as many times as there are stars in the sky, atoms in the air, drops of water in the sea, leaves on the trees, feathers upon birds, scales upon fish, hairs upon animals, at the end of all those innumerable risings and sinkings of that immeasurably vast mountain not one single instant of eternity could be said to have ended; even then, at the end of such a period, after that eon of time the mere thought of which would make our very brain reel dizzily, eternity would have scarcely begun."

## peculiarly conceptual

"Sculpture always depresses me."  
new colors, old covers, covers nevertheless  
colors poking through like nipples  
in light blue silk and drink, the drink.

blue silk silver sheer nipples and wine '57

white on white on white

Venus!

Diana scoffs. tempera plastic linen

conceptual but she (Cecelia Edefalk & Venus) is "be art"

soft sweater on brown skin '81

psychological preoccupation naiveté

Stella's rigorously recedes trope stripe painterly

monochromatic pigmentations calibrates

cadences mellifluously

double white Venus o Persephone

Yuri dih See

"snake six 10 to 1," "like those odds"

nap on afro puff sunglass. fade me a ten spotter

landscape Olmstead

interplay of words and visions, grass on white

buildings, chalk

paint hopscotch ropejump

double dutch bitch

"poetics of confusion"

anxiety boredom

entrapment

failure

guage-based neon now man.

"before me  
stands a boy of  
sixteen. he has  
just been to  
the Louvre for  
the first time  
in his life,  
and he has a  
little bit of a  
painting in his  
pocket—a small  
black hair of  
Rousseau's  
paint brush,  
and the thin  
coat of black  
paint over it,  
which he has  
pulled from a  
painting he  
fell for, and  
could not  
imagine living  
without. the  
boy keeps this  
tiny piece for  
years and years  
in his pocket,  
fingering it  
until there is  
nothing left  
but a pinch of  
sand."

# DIDACTICISM

<b>X</b>	in and out of sync. didacticism	<b>S</b>
<b>E</b>	is unemployable. we don't want	<b>E</b>
<b>S</b>	to die...you?...me?...we don't want	<b>X</b>
	to die. evil lives living bad life	
	work boned playdom fun work	
	alive living boring ennui hate night	
	tonight to die lack out go down.	

in and out of sync  
good boy pet me  
bad boy don't look

**bread line soup line food stamp**  
**gi bill out hand out change ja**  
**Alabama migrate north bread for thought**  
**control lock key nipple dime sell crack pot**  
**smoke employee like a cipher in sands. kill.**

hand paste porcelain drive for sensual a sexual joke

head isn't head at all it's mouth and lip and tongue and sometimes teeth

God Love You!

Mohawks made into icons of divinity

ephemeral nature of material imbues work with melanc

*fingers on keys*

god i love god i want i to fuck  
your number make  
your number  
love me your number  
my number make my member  
hard work two weeks  
disrupt, disrupt.

nonillusionistic

encaustic

paint made by pigment

text  
((Affectionately))  
box



mix wax by sex by heart.

**so**  
**it**  
**so**  
**what?**  
**goes.**

fat thigh solution  
sew 'em up and fill 'em with  
choose and trust choose and trust  
trust and choose and you learn  
from codependency. how goes it?

**how goes**

**S**  
**U**  
**F**  
**F**  
**E**  
**R**

scrawls  
doodles  
erasures  
graphics  
text  
=  
critical voice

"ever to be in hell  
never to be in heaven  
ever to be shut off from the presence of  
god  
never to enjoy the beatific vision"

—  
figuration of gender politics

degradation of women's bodies free  
to choose and weep through rouge  
virginal in latex a long inscription

painting (n.): "morsel in your pocket all summer, fingering it till there was nothing left but powder"  
in Tamil wore away

**g**  
**a**  
**n**  
**e**  
**s**  
**h**  
**a**

remains transcendental if and only  
if purpose is taken into account—  
the remover of obstacles and best  
of favors and successes son of  
Shiva and Pavarti hound you hound

**shiva**

and double white Venus.

tongue-intertwined dream  
of hand brushing my  
vision's right lower fold of  
cashmere covered your left  
soft breast. does every  
artist imagine what it might  
look like to feel this? blond  
hair falling down shoulder  
into armpits. this moment  
extreme, sexual because  
this is the transgression.  
not the thousand imagined  
kisses or wet-warmness of  
coitus, but the boldness to  
brush softly your  
cashmered breast.

in your all summer pocket

child in front  
of Venus and Venus  
shadow art as play  
ars poetica plays  
with art poetics of  
play of drips  
politics of play  
drips of drips  
and grand designs  
or general malaise  
to use the words of to  
use the words

*mahakala*

FINGERNAILS

S  
U  
F  
F  
E  
R

threshold enlarged  
would it and i know it  
would feel good & is  
wrong but it would  
feel (fuck or walk)  
that much is certain.

J  
E  
S  
U  
S  
C  
H  
R  
I  
S  
T

vaginal  
*penile*  
**mammary**  
cufflink  
finger  
anus  
mucus  
clitoris  
*bandage*  
**SOUL-AS-SMOKE**  
lick your \_\_\_\_\_.

mental windows opened really wide

however only a light breeze blows

too gentle to chill or destroy

“my father has what people in the industry  
call ‘the touch’”

offering her life  
sixfaced and  
rope, drawn  
and quartered  
no eyes to cry  
and no tongue to  
-----.

T  
O  
U  
C  
H

**“And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.” and  
the boy touched the painting again and again and again.**

## **mobilizations**

spheres speak.  
voices expound,  
soothe, convince  
like an uncensored  
radio shock-jock,  
workerist in rhetoric,  
a most capable sloganeer,  
making believers  
believe make-believe:

“If there is no God, who pops up the next Kleenex?”

international crusades begin  
based on the hollow song  
in tappitytaptapped phones.  
In the listening hinterlands,  
transistors and elders  
create backlash  
against the Mustachioed Lion;  
appease him with meat  
before genocide ensues.  
the culture wars rage:  
exercises in persecution,  
advertising psychology:

“This is moral country.”

(Ah, the filter doesn't get between you and the flavor!)

Blackhawk helicopters hover over Las Vegas.

snipers paint targets on Times Square.

govt. spends billions on next catchy jingle,

performs manly tasks and tricks on horseback.

unmeltable ethnics serve cold hors d'oeuvres with panache

(Sliced Beef Tenderloin Canapé with Horseradish  
Cream Sauce)

borders close, felonies rise.

the recent hatchet of highly-rated

intelligence men reveals:

attacking something you hate

is a way of defending something you love.

top-shelf liquors take turns before the microphone,

preach brutal social truths:

the haves will always have

until the have-nots want

what they have and take

away what the haves have.

then the have-nots will

be the haves, and the haves

will be dead in shallow graves.

eventually the newly crowned alpha-haves

will via Darwinian Pricipalia

continue to amass what haves have

until a new group of have-nots appear,  
destitute and hungry for iron-rich have blood,  
filing their fingernails into sharp  
points and storming the gated communities.  
righteous parents fantasize  
because, duh, religion,  
theoretically an ally,  
with celebrity supporters, wanders upstairs  
with a pocket full of pacifiers.  
tales of debauched Yale education:  
do you know what you're getting your sweetie?  
we're here.  
we are not going away.  
deal with it.  
those conceited foreigners: to hell with them all!  
o mill towns of '72!  
private-sector employers overcrowd jails.  
o steel towns of '64!  
work will set you free; so will inebriation.  
cycles of a noisy washing  
machine: instant melodrama.  
having little, you cannot risk loss.  
having much, you should more carefully protect it.  
in September frontline soldiers for business  
suspend skepticism, criticism,

give a big two thumbs-up  
to outsourcing, deregulation,  
and mellifluous corporate tax evasion.  
official justifications for the Iraq invasion  
criticize the actual familial collateral occupants,  
still afraid someone is spying on them.  
chances of death  
exceed chances of precipitation.  
Joe Six-Pack doesn't understand,  
shrieks in outrage "Bomb  
them all; every last sand n-----."  
"Can't manufacture that; can't fake it."  
high-born weaklings  
or eggheads hypnotize  
the adoring public with ingenious  
state-level ballot initiatives  
to reelect radio demagogues  
to the altar of centrism.  
It's a nation of sissies—  
tyrannical liberal snobs,  
millionaire volunteers  
who push sound old-age insurance,  
exhort funds for the culture war,  
while imagination after imagination dies,  
made into fur coats that accentuate

slender yet shapely legs on runways in Milan.  
Armageddon says we say "Ban the Bible."  
The beguiled Evangelist grandstands:  
flames of censorial anger among the righteous  
granstandees who botch and rebotch the nation's  
mythology -hawkish scurrility whips  
hundreds into shape: a template that undergirds  
the infrastructure while rolling back price  
after price. Thank you O China. O May-hee-Co.  
Trying to "understand" the terrorists' raw emotions,  
liberals are thought to be effete milquetoasts:  
Deliver the goods!  
Bang their heads!  
Suppress the innocent folkways!  
Deliver us from a thunderous indictment  
and lucky Poodles, pink, four-legged toffs,  
tongues out, eyes up, hiding all they've hoarded,  
mouthing the words of hollow prayers,  
and begging, please, for more.



## Polish stripper in my lifeboat

Dear Polish stripper Monique (if that is your real name),

We are in the same boat. We are in the same lifeboat. And I felt you. Either that or you brilliantly co-opted my sensibilities and took my money. Either way. You can barely speak English. Me too. You are beautiful but that doesn't matter at all. I'm trying to wish you success and happiness upon parting ways because I felt you the way Nijinsky felt people. You don't understand my wishes. I'm crying because you don't understand how to use articles. I write poems meant to be beautiful. They are only beautiful to me. The language in them is beautiful and the mind in them is beautiful. I write only of the mind and of the collective minds—essences. Sometimes the writing is like buds and sometimes like flowers. You are like a flower and I am a bud and you are like a stone that weighs on me. You and I will someday get off the lifeboat and walk across a bridge I've built to each of the seven continents and oceans. Someday you'll put your tits away. When your beauty dries up. You are a linguistic savant. Instead of dancing will you just speak Polish to me? I don't know Polish, but I'm sure I would feel it. You said you are half Spanish but don't know Spanish. From what little I know of Spanish, it's beautiful. I know Spanish only fractionally, but I feel it. Even reading poets who write in Spanish in translation I feel it. I know how the words sound in Spanish so when I read it it's beautiful in Spanish or in English. In hearing you I have become you. This is the way it is. This is the way it is. I am still listening and talking and feeling all at once. There are only these three things because three is perfect or more perfect than two. Instead of wishing you success and happiness and love I should have tried opening like a flower. As you weighed on me like a stone and I felt your troubles, so did I weigh on you and closed off completely. As I watched you take

men back to dance for them, I knew they would not feel you except in a strict corporeal way and I was sad. For you, it must have seemed like I disappeared. This man. This man who caused you all this trouble. And disappeared. I heard you. I am you. I write as you. I write as you. When I next concentrate on sending love out as bubbles (little worlds within a big world and universe like bubbles that will not break) I will try to reach you. My powers are so weak. My bubbles break because of my weakness. I cannot make promises I cannot keep. I cannot save you or anyone or me. But I try. I am you and I am trying. That is all I can say. And in trying I mean failing, always failing. I hope somewhere to be successful but I don't think it will be here. I am crying because I am too honest. I have become too many people. I have become too many people's tears. I am not a well or a boat, only a man. I cannot hold water for long nor can I float above it. Soon it will pour forth, enter in. Our boat will sink my dear and the well will be useless. We will drown because you trusted me and my feeling. Your goals are simple. These feelings? Complex. I am writing into clichés because I fear clichés. The collective honesty of a cliché makes me weep. I change clichés but I can't change them, only in our lifeboat of language. I can't change anything because it's already happening. There is too much thirst and too many tears and not enough joy. I don't feel joy, only you.

Love,

me and the people I have become

## epistrophic

dear magellan,

the epistrophic changes. epistrophy is epistrophe. would you rather you were the bull, the matador, the red sheet or the killing spear? would you rather be turning toward divine ground? or on divine ground turning? have you discovered the act of discovery? are you that kind of discovery or circumnavigation? earth--the shell of the turtle? has the act of discovery helped you to be discovered? has the art of discovering others who have made discoveries been the discovery? is discovery of others in the act of discovering others who discovered others before them, cowering in their own bewilderment, been the discovery you have been seeking? the same melodic material same material, melodic, is repeated is incantatory is repeated is incantized is repeated at different pitches at opposing pitches at similar pitches in the pitch of the moment in the pitch of a line of phrase is repeated in the cigarette smell on the black finger on the key the smell of the key is incantatory is repeated in the moment when the pianist who is no pianist who is no piano who has the key but is not the key smells the ivory, chanting, thrumming the key(s) feels the charge of the bull elephant in musth? the increasing tension tense taut taught like piano wire? thrumming tension in the electrical wires over the strata of fields of mind--artist deep in creation madness? do you? feel? that way?

let me know your answer,

s

**diptych: abuse / a narration**

a nun	a knock
a nun	a name
a nun	a boy
a nun	a joke
a nun	a ring
a knock	a fist
a knock	a punch
a knock	an ear
a knock	cauliflower
a knock	a thorn
a none	a boy
a none	a cross
a none	a man
a none	a body
a none	a christ
anon	the fire
anon	the dove
anon	the sweat
anon	the blood
anon	the faceless
a now	a knock
a now	a prowl
a now	a face
a now	nosebleed
a now	grace
amen	a rape
amen	a pierce
amen	a lame
amen	a man
amen	a maim.

## the love song of homer j. simpson

what jimmied donuts I've scarfed, and where, and why  
i have forgotten, and what subtle chocolate iced cake  
or boston crème lies staling on the countertop until morrow?  
the dunkin' donuts' box is full of crumbs—ghosts rattling

the cardboard on the way out to the blue BFI,  
while all the while my stomach sinks with deep-fried,  
rock-like heaviness, a black raspberry-filled and sugar  
covered pre-digested morsel. who will come

to your ne'er dark window, o mustachioed man?  
the "time to make the donuts" disappears moment by moment,  
yet the doughy goodness restocks the rack at dawn  
the way Prometheus' liver regenerates nightly to be redevoured.

i cannot say what donut-luscious mornings have come and gone,  
but the myriad-flavored treats sing in me, and then pass on.

variation on two phrases from *Othello*

If I had a cap to tip,  
a cup, or a ewe to tup,  
to sit on my lap,  
I'd toss her a tip  
as she strips to trap  
my lust, while my eyes  
feast, and I'm tempted  
again by the two-backed beast.

## Lost Year at the Restaurant

Five below and going lower in Chicago  
and Gustavo is starting the Mexicans' cars  
in the parking garage, while snow  
blows off the roof into the coat necks  
of my next-last table. They ignore  
my spiel, glowering at my second  
attempt to take their drink order.  
Meanwhile the Mexicans smile and cook  
sirloin and begin to clean while work  
songs fly around the stoves and prep tables  
from *La Ley o Ciento Cinco Punto Uno*. You know  
Cesar's tenor joins the radio and rises  
above the sound of the deep  
fryer's crackle, then Eduardo and Ricardo holler  
obscene Spanish until he ceases—  
wounded machismo. *Los Locos* don't care, though,  
because Cesar's from Ecuador not Mexico.  
It's quarter to twelve and Leo hovers  
over the grill cleaning the wall and hood  
and Chino chuckles and covers the sauces  
saying scandalous things about Fernando's girl.  
Soon it will be midnight and champagne, another year  
wasted and why oh why do I still serve steaks?  
Gustavo comes back frozen and says "*adios, pelon.*"  
I say "*hasta manana, Gus,*"  
and he goes out singing "Hey Jude,"  
Next morning, 1/1, I'm jealous of the hot  
Mexican breakfast the *Locos* make,  
sometimes they offer me a plate,  
and it feels as good as it tastes—  
*d—e—l—i—c—i—o—s—o.*

## Obedients

*At Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Elementary, Chicago,  
a fire claimed the lives of 92 school children and three nuns  
on December 1, 1958. Firemen found 24 children  
at their desks in one room, their school books open before them.  
—Newspaper Clippings, (www.olafire.com)*

Did Sister smell extinguished candle  
smoke? Did she hear a censer clang  
off pitch like a broken bell,  
a dove beat wings against the window?

Sister's hand recoiled when she touched  
the brass doorknob. She fell to her knees.  
Was the intense heat redeeming,  
or was Lucifer breathing light through the window?

Kneeling in agony, she stared at the ceiling,  
smoothed her ornate habit and wiped  
beads from her forehead. She calmly  
delivered orders: The children

obeyed, even as their lungs choked  
on hellish smoke. Sister whispered  
while flames devoured the wooden door.  
Deep in prayer, she did not look at the children

who put their heads down on clasped  
hands, closed their eyes, and burned.



## Astrophysical Chicago

A tragedy lost in history.

79 days post *Lusitania* twice-torpedoed

While still partially tied to its

*(Heraclitus: one river, two rivers?)*

Saturday, 24 July 1915 approx. 7:30 am

betwixt Clark, LaSalle,

the excursion steamer *Eastland* floated

still partly tied to the wharf

on the Chicago River,

Waiting to take 2,572

Western Electric workers

to Michigan City, Indiana for a company picnic.

Western Electric—

the foremost supplier

of parts for the new luxury

known as the telephone.

Most employees became immersed

in the factory's burgeoning

industrial-age culture.

Nine-hour work days.

Suits and ties for gents.

Dresses for the ladies...

Dresses occasionally

got caught in the cogs

of cable winders—

Tragic results.

*Along the way*

*Tears drown in the wake of delight*

*There's nothing like this built today.*

Metropolitan ballast for black  
    skyscrapers spawning  
contrived canyons,  
    terra cotta flowers  
    blooming out of the Great  
Chicago Fire, 1871, which claimed  
    a third as many lives.

Dock at the river's edge.

*I did it.*

*My ship.*

*I did it.*

*I will stay here.*

*(Electronic Voice Phenomena (EVP) is the term  
traditionally used to describe unexpected  
sounds or voices sometimes found on recording media.*

This example was recorded at Chicago's Excalibur nightclub,  
an old building rumored to be a temporary morgue for victims.  
The voice may be Harry Pedersen, captain of the Eastland.)

confusion on the bridge:

water ballast in the *Eastland's* no. 2 pump,  
not no. 3; no, not no. 2,  
ballast in the no. 3 pump!

The excursion steamer Eastland rolled over.

*The weight all on one side apparently  
proved too much and the Eastland  
began to tilt badly. We worked  
frantically at the pumps to try to bring  
her—*

"List to port 7 degrees,"  
*Dishes begin slipping  
off of the shelves and racks  
in the pantry.*  
"10, 15 degrees, 20,"  
*One or two women  
are pinned beneath the refrigerator.*  
"25, 30, 45 degrees!"  
*August Nelson is trapped under a piano.*

On the morning of July 24, 1915.

The tipping point  
*they couldn't swim*  
slight correction  
*they were carried into the river*  
the tipping point has been reached,  
ropes snapping, breached.

*Sailors know what to do on a capsizing  
ship; passengers (dragged underwater) do not.*

The result was one of the worst maritime disasters.

*Nothing in the world  
is as soft and yielding as water, yet—*

**T**ragic human losses

Chicago lived lost in workaday haze. Hog slaughter. Wind. The Bridge of Sighs.

*They remained together clinging onto the railings.*

In American history. More than eight hundred people.

*My ship.  
I will stay here.*

*(When you transition out of your body  
at the time of death, you as Self, apparently  
continue to exist in nonphysical reality.  
These discarnate Selves appear  
to reside on many levels of existence.)*

metropolitan ballast  
for modern lakefront  
cruise liners

that launch from a shore  
of created land,  
landfill.

the city sinks  
and settles each year  
and will turnover someday.

it still stinks  
like onions—  
what Red Cross will rescue?

Lost their lives within a few feet of shore.

*white as a sheet and soaked to the bone,  
Captain Pedersen pulls himself into the pilot house.*

The coffee break  
had not yet been invented.  
Unionization was unheard-of.

*On those stepping  
into rivers staying the same  
other and other waters flow.*

**A** mnesiac souls speak accusations:

*That boat was always unsafe and it was criminal to run it.*

*They couldn't swim!*

*They were carried into the river!*

The Eastland was filled to overflowing with picnic.

*Marianne Aanstad--  
did not like the feel of the ship.*

*Borghild Aanstad  
was taught to swim by her childhood pal,  
Ernie Carlson and saved herself.*

*Charles Hart  
pulled between 50 and 100 people from the river.*

*Abraham Isaac Blumenthal  
jumped into the river to help.*

*Peter Boyle  
gave his life in the effort to save others.*

A population, low-class,  
mostly foreign,  
hanging on the verge  
of starvation, and dependent  
for its opportunities  
upon the whim of men  
every bit as brutal  
every bit as unscrupulous  
as the old-time slave drivers.

Bound Western Electric Company employees and their families.

*Seven hundred bodies*

*were taken from the river*

*or the hull of the overturned steamer,*

*whose side was cut open*

*by gas flames to admit divers.*

When the tragedy occurred. Investigations following the disaster.

*I remember hands reaching out from the water;*

Unlike the Titanic,  
mostly all the people  
on board were working-class people.

*it was just like tears falling from the sky.*

Until recently, we didn't write  
about working-class people.

1886—Haymarket Square

(blocks from Western Electric's Clinton St. plant)

The violent confrontation  
resulted in several  
deaths and many injuries.

Authorities blamed

German anarchists.

The Haymarket affair grabbed  
the attention of Western

Electric leaders. "We have been having  
a part in Great Events...

The labor question has come  
right up against us."

Raised questions about the ship's seaworthiness.

*I did it.*

*My ship.*

*I will stay here.*

*(Some examples are more compelling than others;  
ultimately, the listener must decide  
as to the authenticity and meaning of the phenomena.)*

*Crowds wait patiently for hours  
in hope of finding bodies of kin or friends  
taken to the Second Regiment Armory  
(now Oprah's Harpo Studio 110 N. Carpenter at W. Washington).*

And inspections of Great Lakes steamers in general.

**T**his powerful documentary of tragedy based on real history gets \*\*\* 1/2 stars:

22 entire families were killed  
on the *Eastland* among the 844 dead.

*She came to rest in the mud  
of the Chicago River, in just 20 feet of water.*

*Her bow was a mere 19 feet from the wharf,  
and her stern was 37 feet from the wharf.*

*She...was rapidly refloated,  
towed to South Chicago, renamed  
the U.S.S. Willmette ... She survived  
as a naval training vessel  
until she was broken up for scrap in 1947.*

Erected by the Illinois Math and Science Academy.

*Passersby on the Clark Street Bridge*

*claimed to hear cries and moans*

*coming from the river.*

*Perhaps the horror of the event*

*impressed itself on this place,*

*where it continues to replay*

*itself over and over again.*

*Nothing in the world*

*is as soft and yielding as water*

*Yet for dissolving the hard and inflexible,*

*nothing can surpass it.*

And the Illinois State Historical Society, 1988.

*The Eastland Disaster remains a case of social amnesia.*

*I did it.*

*My ship.*

*I will stay here.*

*Along the way*

*Tears drown in the wake of delight*

*There's nothing like this built today*

*You'll never see a finer ship in your life*

*We sail today.*



Tragedy loses water a drop at a time—

Metropolitan ballast—

Social amnesia—

Gum spots speckle

sidewalk squares—

Count one, two, three—

Winds out of southwest

15–20 Knots.

Otherwise sunny and clear.

And to paradise which is a port—

How will the dead bury their dead?

Seek of the water the water's love.

How will the dead bury their dead?

Shall we go again? Breast to water–breast?

The dead will bury their dead.

*I did it.*

*My ship.*

*I will stay here.*

O Amnesia! Cling to the water and concrete

Between LaSalle and Clark Street,

Webbed in your own electricity.

*Heraclitus:*

*“what happens*

*to the river*

*after you step into it?"*

*Ask them to praise  
your forgetfulness  
and make it last—*

*You'll never see a better ship in your life.*

Breathing a moment, in pockets

of trapped oxygen.

Depart as air (you, understood?). Rocking endlessly—

In Seventh-month Midnight.

*We sail today.*

Breathe a moment, longer.

## Mixed Metaphors

bullhorn gone time like stop, came to the doorway  
stop porch. porch under full moon like ram horn like seashell  
simulacrum because like wanting like song. water  
like falling water like pain hair like secret blueprints  
like sketch or stretch like sun. mourning like moving  
like pink paper make steam or rain like leaking like  
roof like shingle say ceiling comedown. data like intrudes,  
Mother Mary come May day like disaster hopping  
disaster a daughter young made cobbled like hollow  
say mistress camp trade loosey come loving said  
daughter like lovely like play. single like lifelike sex  
life like trundle. underneath beneath like Freudian  
come Master like eternity pistol steely like marksman  
immortal immaterial like ethereal come wingless  
like tipping straight forty drunk knife. dresser come mud  
thumps done feigned done Mongol. neighbor  
like Kingish come mister like dawn do it like Keebler  
like Debbie gone down, come cracker crave crawdad,  
crave crab it like rabbit like falling like rain. say flush  
it come Sam like weaver on loom. wearer day woven  
playmake it scrub screamer, pile like sandbox come plenty  
play Moe. meaner like ever than water like bird dust.  
lover come lately go lucky come bias like flight

or penguin like flyer say later sand love sang lumpy  
of light. leave him come leave come her fall come her  
flight. fix it bean grower been wheat like false idol, come  
down come graver save planter like crop. paint mix it  
dance baby like flow it like sharper. say river of Dix,  
crib it baby, fall baby like cower crave cribbage crave  
crack. come dayglo, Black Rider, like owner singer signs  
to dancer made Dave. do it. like won it. like pressure  
like Bird. water pains water craves obsession like scent  
gone absurd. finale sing croaker sound mocker like time,  
watcher save bottlecap like Pepsi like rhyme. Michael  
come angel arch say swording say fleece say Venus  
come watching like winging and singing, Hermes  
o wheel o deal like crown grown young scalp in Pigitalia come  
scalping like free like whitewater like falling water like hair  
smell like obsessions like claustrophobia got trimmed.

## Invitation to the Cult of Musth

My fingers hold the old pocketknife. "Many uses,"  
master said, and a picture on the side, carved  
into ivory: a bull elephant grunts, solitary.  
"Cut something else away," he said, grinning.  
My hand worked the wood block, and the pen  
worked the page until I forgot the elephant,  
his feet, trunk, tusk, and the flies he swats  
with his tail. the bird on his back, though, sprang alive  
in my hand as the knife trembled. "Hold it tight,  
Damn it," he said. I couldn't, and the wooden bird  
slipped away, a flutter of feathers and wind.  
I close the knife with a click and drop  
it into the pocket of my worn denim jacket.  
The bird rests hidden by the tall plains' grass;  
The pen writes another word, and the bull enters  
musth, sees master wave a shotgun, and fells a tree.  
We got drunk to give us the courage—"goddamn it,  
point the shotgun," he said; I pointed. I pointed.

## Fishing Near the Power Plant, Waukegan, Illinois

the blue-black lake slick with oil, and rainbowed  
by gasoline, burps up a carp for a fisherman  
under the facade of the old power plant.

at first the fish flops and fights, hanging from thin line.  
the fisherman heaves the carp up and leaves  
it on concrete breakwall. a sign says carp are rough fish.

the carp stops moving his mouth.

his brown scales rust dull red; his false eye mirrors  
the glassy calm of the blue-black lake  
slick with oil, and rainbowed by gasoline.

## notes toward fiction of a fiction

sleep with small-voiced woman,  
all nose, throat, intent moans.  
no! not sleep with,  
hold her nervous hand.  
hold a hand? no!  
gaze at face, silhouetted, her face  
above the rim of my glass  
(Bombay Sapphire, Tonic,  
sweat runs down sides)  
across the stainless steel bar.  
never gaze.

instead, finger dents in frozen  
car door steel in stop-motion  
ice time. cabin feverish, check  
the locks while she drinks  
dark red Australian Shiraz  
inside The Matchbox  
(770 N Milwaukee Ave)  
bar with friends.

touch her car? no!  
stare at her picture  
in worn-out wallet,  
reminisce--skin tan so  
it tasted coconut sweet--  
sharp, whiskey,  
a blend, Crown Royal?

no wallet-sized picture.  
read in a bookstore,  
her plain (Jane?) name on plain page,  
stop for a moment;  
eyes close, reverie--

-----, press into my eyelids  
open: a woman turns  
bookshelf corner before me,  
her dressed-up curves  
blur out of sight.



supermarket tabloid tableau

buy one get one  
teriyaki pork tenderloin @ \$9.99/each.  
buy one get one tom cruise,  
but one loaf Brownberry, get one  
jar of Hellman's real mayonnaise  
buy one katie katie holmes?!?

buy one new & improved! angelina-30  
get one brad-41,  
bye one jennifer-36 (gown by vera wang) *bye*

buy one more tom-43-i-feel-the-need  
for katie-i-love-you-dawson-26  
tom, i want your baby baby buy buy buy.

buy two (anna nicole) smooth scoops vanilla  
get one (j-lo's controversial dress) sweet can of  
(aisle six) pie filling free

buy one britney's (no waiting lane three)  
hit me baby  
get one justin (ten items or less)  
get one cameron.

buy one addicted (TGIF on ABC)  
buy one cute, anorexic twin  
get one crash buy one  
(i watched you) pill get one  
(grow up) diet  
(mary kate) free

free sex sex tape one tape paris two  
gena lee buy one baywatch babe  
buy one colin farrell (bad boy buy) get

*unauthorized commercial  
exploitation of the highly private  
and confidential (FREE SEX) videotape*

*Good quality of information—*

buy one get one free  
    buy one get one  
        get one free

*exceeds all bounds*

buy one  
    get one  
        buy one, get—

*of common human decency.*

you may hate me  
but it ain't no lie  
baby  
buy  
buy  
bye.

sub-ode; aubade; forbid

*for Maurice Scully*

*follow the sentence of a single set*  
*of footprints* set in motion  
by a subset of silence. the subtext  
of said subset reads like a subsonic  
subscript or afterthought gone  
hallelujahed. it takes sub one hour  
for EMTs to arrive on scene / talk  
him down: panting and rummaging  
for sunglasses. strap and substrap,  
pursestrap, mousetrap secure.  
negotiator walks the carwalk, cattalks  
shop to the mad bomber, so mellifluously  
he melts while standing in wreckage  
of the bombed-out mosque. in america,  
anyway, pussy is the holiest of holies.  
that's why flipping to a random centerfold  
the centrifugal force draws open  
the vulvic, glossed, embossed photograph,  
painted nails gleam so in the  
subconscious the smell of nail polish  
cannot be subverted or subsumed.  
we subsist on such imagery. scintillation  
after seeing the footprints—one set leads

in all or many or most or some or a few or a couple  
directions directionlessly disciple-esque  
blink. blink. subclimactic opening word: wound.

## Map of the Hydrogen World

*A message from the Hydrogen World Council:*

*One of our first ambitions is to have members in every country of the world, and the map is designed to encourage this. If your country is not shaded on your regional map then please register your details and interest in hydrogen and add another shaded area to our map. In due course we will have Hydrogen World Council projects underway for which we will seek assistance from members. One of the first will be to gather local information on how rising sea levels would affect the areas where members live...*

not a periodic table.

cannot measure this

in megatons.

or explain via

any metaphor for TNT.

Map of the Hydrogen World.

guides, disembodied troubadors and troubaritz,

whistle between verses,

earphones in.

two thirds in love with easeful water

waves lap shores.

Xes marking spots.

interstices of lust. and leftovers.

ozoned for her pleasure.

Pleiades, the infinitely small ache, forever moves outward.

Original Matter.

chariot wheel spins measured crowds in spears

and the frequency of waves.

the crest on left breast pocket. deity brand shirt monogrammed

with a coat of arms not so resplendent

in cyprian pink.

she rolls her sleeves. she pops her collar. *goddess*.

sees waves roll, drop their hydrogen atoms: fads.

world as Mad Bomber, trigger-happy and target-rich or Americanized.

honey, be

resistant.

reactionary.

depleted.

map w/ webbed roads returns upon varicose existence like bread crumbs to  
labyrinthian core where atoms (H) sparkle, diamonds barely visible through ore, and  
the treaty between lead  
and time. leave it unsigned.

News travels fast as news.

## A The Thieves Monogramly

A The presidents and full colonels  
homely, The's his to in although wifey.

A The coffins down dime Stop!  
futures (soybean and porkbelly)

delicious a throbbingly to since hencer  
behindly of because in on nightstandard.

Tribes The and dawns whistles hearer  
stupor, keyboard The's surfboard din

Eyesing asleepness. The's walk  
accordion helplessness, smith limer

The's companioning knifeware.  
A The tariffs mooning shinehams.

Sackbuts of The's because corpses  
The, O, of The's because flingly

behind whispersly. The's accomplish  
extraordinary to allows, to teamwork, to

realms, bananas to accomplishers to in  
frontal ordinarian. Smearness O The

Perchancely beam to of moonswine  
darklingly to of coin in thrushworthy

faucetous. A The presidents to bathroomly  
fixturian in of midnightly mourns.

Dawnly, comeward canly of here where,



Khrushchev oblongs in on testicularly Stop!

Breakfast!

Of! In On!

Oblonging diaphoneset limpingly candled  
thus worcestering, The, ofly, milady, bees,

Buses betwixterly 20 knots him Tuesday.  
Nottinghamshirelandville singly garbageian.

Finest chairs/chaired. <a href=philos>  
Logons The. Recenter </b> enstopped.

Ins syllabic mindful syllable turns of The's  
lutefully chimed home landing of In.

Vacuous The, Ghanan trippingness of froms  
fortressly, vicing cakely behindness on essences.

“yao”

dear Jackson Pollock's memory,

oh well i tend to agree with the crying/passion/exhaustion argument but you've put me in a tough spot yet again. living with the enemy of our undefined yet common belief sys. don't worry abt being defensive and btw it's molehills buy n e ways. what r u signing my year book or something? and this faculty meeting day makes me want to quit my job idealistically like student in Updike short story “A&P” and are we going to just become vagrants? & is that all of "what's left" to do? and and and listen to Brahms 4th like I kno what tha fuck he means? and listen to jazz like I kno wtf? and read like I kno wtf? and write things so obscure even me the transparent eyeballed creator doesn't know wtf they it all means? I guess the point was I'm tired right now tired like not go to sleep tired but tired in other ways and ways I can't defend or argue abt but it might just be time to lay low & there are no readily avail. times on any foreseen horizons for such lazy nonsensical endeavors. *On the floor I am more at ease, I feel nearer.* I'm better at buying books than reading them but they don't and I don't understand why not they don't pay you for that more likely the opp. and i know what's-his-name sd steal this book and all that but i don't feel like being cooped up ether. I mn either. *an epic struggle between man and material might unfold.* lots of luck, honey.

love, not chaos,

s

**Subject: And in losing my cell phone I lost myself**

Dear James,

Attachment is a / the problem. I'm holding on to everything. The Bubble means there are circles means dear James returns or replaces. Expands, at least. I'm pacifying myself. I want to see what happens. Not in the least. Only one question remains--even holding on to nothing is something? How to break off? Existentialism is existence is something. Keep piling on the worries. Somebody's done for is camphor. Bees know building, and if the honeycomb crumbles, they know building. The honey is still sweet. Therefore birth must be rebirth. Original sin is fallacious. There is no creation--only something and nothing. Is and not. Something rings--my cell phone and my neuroses. To answer? Breathing like waving is waves. The mind is the raft. Spray spills over the burstable sides. On the starving raft, we eat each other for meaning. The problem is the stomach, the wanting. Insatiability makes detachment the ultimate koan. The rational mind seeks the subconscious seeks the rational mind. Each one provokes the other--an old married couple. A warrior dreams in colors: killing and conquests. He can't escape the conditioning, the training. He was born a lamb but grew and sharpened his fangs. The only notes he hits form the minor keys. In this battle someone is winning, someone losing. Tomorrow everything changes. So it goes, dear James. The trees dance at the thought.

If you know what I mean, you are attached to this message.

Best,

No Such Agency (NSA)

## Selected Nerudialectics

### postcard #27

and not having a cell phone

is like death, but white

smoke rises in a black city—

true music.

Peace,  
\_\_\_\_\_

rough bodies dig

enough to be rough

when trying to be tender:

stubble

shoulder

tooth

pubis

anus

numb arm.

### postcard

sidestep left

align

shoot

repeat:

sidestep left

align

shoot

make sure the flash  
is in the “off” position.

only flashless  
photography allowed  
in the art museum.

sidestep

sidestep

shoot

shoot.

left

left.

replication genius.

leap onto train

bound for Western forgotten

outpost: Boise, Cody or Cheyenne:

suitcase

briefcase

nutcase

fruitcake

*Odas Elementales*: check.

earth spread thin

in granules. oxygen molecules.

sun scraps. physics. wave's~~intervals:

sheets  
mites  
wet spot  
stain  
skin cells.

**Ab-Original. Mode. El.**

harum-scarum scrum.

squid soils suburban unmowed

lawn @ dawn in winter:

stabilize.

subconscious

mascot

cheers

yet “child-friendly” cap.

she sexual non-native

discussion, a check, cash

next Wed., yr unwedding nite:

@

El

rattle

**postcard #1984**

bloodstained sidewalk

outside Cook County Hospital

a man discards his sweater

same way he discards faith.

--

the buddha waits in swaddling

clothes. sipping a martini.

Love,

\_\_\_\_\_

**postcard #19**

The Thirsty Soul

W. Belmont

6 men / 1 woman

a Round Table discussion—

business: a court of brass

and skin, smoke trails,

thick air.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_

hotel.

“you shook me.”

@ 25, indigenous. confuses

senses: falling falling *la*

*lengua* roils. waterfall, *en medias:*

*res*

photo

coiffure

ball (he bought you)

for the gown.

**postcard: km**

Adenocarcinoma

25 years

9 months

friends' exclamation marks:

false optimism.

spit: phlegm and snow

clings to every branch.

Yours in Faith,

**postcard #666**

in the city, i'm so anomalous

even ignorant bigots exempt

me from stereotypes: “all poets

are faggots and effetes, but not you,

you're cool man.” cool enough

to befriend the beast.

Regards,

**Apathology**

MQ-1 Predator drones

torture with man-thought & machine-speak,

aerial photography and pipeline monitoring:

torture

affects

the tortured

and the torturer.

**postcard #847**

“The suburbs are more like a sentence than a place.”

Hugs,

low-light and infrared

cameras stalk torture survivors.

**postcard #52**

If you want me again, you can pinpoint  
my exact location using the gumspots  
beneath my bootsoles. The satellite sounds  
its electronic yawp through the stratosphere;  
your image departs as megapixels.

111 cigarette burns. keep watch:

drones.

denizens.

gang rape.

space superimposed trail

decapitated or caked

with blood, anonymous bodies

live and die around me:

worse than

torture:

the screams

of Others.

**“Last Balkan Tango at the End of Time”**

NATO bombs shatter

unbuilt bridge pilings stack

between cultures. Novi Sad saxophone:

plays.

second-to-last

Balkan

domino

falls.

**postcard #00**

the bubble has burst! i'm standing on Randolph St. beneath the falling  
terra cotta. if i'm hit it matters as much as it doesn't matter. i gave my  
wallet to the govt. and i don't want it back!  
warmest regards,

\_\_\_\_\_

Serbian

will?

halt! ethnic cleansing,

traces of cultures embedded—

Serbia, Bosnia, Macedonia & gypsy waltz:

Belgrade.

Ottoman

minarets.

juxtapositions.

one

lonely

mosque.

**postcard #90**

off ramp, on ramp. East *is* West.

put yr 10W30 to the test.

Viscosity: a synonym for

Vroom! Vroom! Vroom!

Respectfully,

\_\_\_\_\_

Novi Sad's Boris

Kovac weaves delicate moods.

plays "An Apocalyptic Dance Party:"

geography

becomes

history;

destiny—

metaphor:

bombed-out bridges.

**postcard # 7**

stanley kubrick:

slow movies,

speed reader

**postcard # buddhas 1**

met yr buddha?

sharpen yr knife.

with wisdom,

-----

**postcard # buddhas 2**

we have met

our buddhas

here's the knife...

in due time,

-----



**postcard #dada**

give the truth a new impetus  
like a lasting slingshot  
“here is a rock.” don’t aim,  
just shoot. “i have some  
centimeters here in my bag.”  
pushing. psychological penetration  
aims at compulsory national  
stultification. and the moon rises  
in the tinted train window like a  
rare nipple. abstract art is everything  
and bubbling, the open fields erect  
new malls w/o hands skitter like  
spiders like centipedes. gunless  
police myrmidons wait in shadows,  
canyons. flatheaded, vile. murder  
puts a lamb to sleep. she still  
has teeth. philistines have death  
and shells to eat.  
astoundingly timeless,  
-----

**Pseudo. Ode. To a myspace addict.**

quo-stat neal  
kneels next to altar  
of dean-o-nomics and flightless birds:

penguin  
ostrich  
emu  
kiwi  
tied-down albatross.

free genius flips  
pages between sheets. carseats.  
Ethernet cable fumes like *Junky*.

page hits:

16

19

27

84

**postcard # 12:00**

noon the hour  
of terror, mostly  
of love, delicately.

our sick ears  
torture  
whips and arrows

sebastian, semolina, crustacean.

battery becomes property batters the weak the  
tired your poor yearn in alleyways drawstring  
darkness sores at your service transience mean  
world-as-toilet obsessions blondes in mink

back swim backwards clockface white-as-night  
gardenial long overdue shivers shudders  
disbelief trotline taut lineage go fish fished out  
kill fish used noon on the ground cigarette hours.  
All My Love Always,

-----

burning fingers on keys.

smoke turns smoker bluer—ideas:

seratoninize cold air.

green giant freezes peas.

asparagutizes urine: “cry baby cry”:

methanethiol

unreal.

laughing gas. castaneda  
laughs and listens. power  
rises from insideout his groin:

peyotian:

cleanse

and

retrieve

and

master

silence.

**postcard # july**

what i did on my summer  
vacation was tectonic.  
send more choc. chip cookies.

Your son,

\_\_\_\_\_

dimethyl

sulfide

dimethyl

sulfoxide

methylthio methane.

**postcard # 2**

if defecation is religion, let cottonelle be the eucharist.  
best,  
\_\_\_\_\_

anesthetic. pedantic. coerce.

interrogate. fluorescent lights' "52<sup>nd</sup>

St. Theme." Plants two needles:

Bellevue

spindrift

madman

spuncycle

habits die young.

**postcard: fungal body**

everywhere somewhere something in metaphor w/  
mushrooms o curvature o creature, spinal, spore.  
fruitful,  
---

East River sunup.

Pannonica de Koenigswarter chirps

notes of vulture. coyote. felinity:

cleans

cat-hair couch,

lint brushes

bail money.

**postcard**

but this all of this, especially  
this, perfect failure at best.  
see you soon,  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Two Dissolutions.

current carries leaves

rise to new trees:

reincarnation of current affairs. cretinizations:

dead skin

cell death

dead skin cell.

### postcard

the only thing we can be certain of is the  
things we want to know for certain will  
remain mysteries.

\*\*,  
\_\_\_\_\_

corpse: toxicological examination

played to the sound

of "Titanic Waltz." Balkan atrocitor.

### postcard

guess a number between one and the  
soul. in Dublin. buses run incessantly  
but to ride? admit one: defeat and  
breathe smoke. erin wants to be  
considered beautiful whether she is or  
not. the sign on the machine reads. coke  
and always will be. perceptions and  
prescriptions aside breath fills with or  
chokes on mucus give the gate on st.  
stephen's green locks at dusk. give up  
the body. exhaust is in a heap exhausted  
by exhaust. bus. stack. bout. bone.  
diesel breathes. tag on jeans: admission.  
city pulse. dead at morning. eyes glaze:  
perma-hangover. the flawless glimpse.

I'm late again,  
\_\_\_\_\_

erstwhile

"no one will beat us"

"Slobo."

leaves today, day

of fame. killer killed

via trial of the trial:

pariah

dissolution

lost—

*two*

*hundred*

*fifty*

*thousand.*

**postcard**

i will rgecizone you

as long as some parts

are in the right place.

## Messages

The toggle says missiles  
The toggle says guns

The bomb says "Happy Ramadan"

The book tossed in the toilet & pissed on says  
"love your neighbor near and far."

On the ground, they run like chickens  
at the dull Apache's roar

And its blades make wind like horses  
wild with riders chasing war

The training says "no guilt motherfucker"  
Base's intercom—static buzz

The colonel says open fire  
(when fired upon)

*I think I saw a bullet fly  
but there's no time to think*

*The bomb does all my talking  
to the bunker full of faces*

*A distant voice says roger  
after it pulls the trigger*

*I think it is my own.*

## Gun Variation

*after and for Bruce Nauman*

what are you going to do when the guns are drawn?

what are you?

are *you* going to o?

what to do?

what guns?

what are you going to do when the guns are drawn?

are you the guns?

what to draw?

what are you?

you are

going

going

go n e.

the guns are drawn.

what? when?

what are the guns?

d u e

to

the guns:

d e a

th!

you'

re going do w n!

w e o w n guns!

wh o go t the guns?

w e do, u s.

what are you going to do when the guns are drawn?

re a d  
y?

t a g: d.o. a.

what, g o d?

y the s a  
w

o

r d.

what are you going to do re:

guns?

when the guns are drawn?

re a d  
y?

draw.



## Diphych

Ironically, the greatest threat to American freedom in the fifties was not the communism that was feared by so many, but the spread of irrational anticommunism and the rise of right wingers and fascists who were willing to suspend civil liberties and other constitutional rights and freedoms in order to fight an overblown communist threat. As Truman and other critics tried to point out in the fifties, McCarthy and his type were the best friends the Soviet Union had in America, for they did much more to disrupt American foreign policy and domestic tranquility than American communists could ever hope to do. Truman was not just engaging in political rhetoric in his often-repeated assertion that “the greatest asset the Kremlin has is Senator McCarthy.”

Ironically, the greatest threat to American freedom in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century is not the terrorism that is feared by so many, but the spread of irrational antiterrorism and the rise of right wingers and fascists who are willing to suspend civil liberties and other constitutional rights and freedoms in order to fight an overblown terrorist threat. As critics like John Murtha try to point out, Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld and Rice are the best friends terrorists have in America, for they do much more to disrupt American foreign policy and domestic tranquility than terrorists could ever hope to do. Murtha and others are not just engaging in political rhetoric in the often-repeated assertion that the greatest asset the terrorists have is in the White House.

## Diptych: Paleo–Balkan Substratum

racing foam	
	under scraps.
rubble sun	
	pins souls
to razor wire.	
	swaddle ‘neath
manure; lamb	
	breath rhythm
hums, whirls,	
	radiates. no
wall, stable	
	eyes, stars
after sayings:	
	women and
burials. ghost	
	“Slobo,” Spring
blooms leafless	
	trees roar;
acid showers	
	birth May ash.

## Notes and Works Cited

“materiality” was written using cuttings from the descriptive signs next to paintings/sculptures at the Art Institute of Chicago on March 28, 2006. I included language which caught my eye or ear. Later, I merged the cut language with other lyrical jottings of my own and these sources: Eleni Sikelianos *The Book of Jon*; James Joyce *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*; The King James Bible (Matthew 19:14–15);

“mobilizations”: “What’s the Matter with Liberals?” by Thomas Frank in New York Review of Books (<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/17982>); World Socialist Website (<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2004/jan2004/2004-j03.shtml>)

“Obedients” uses a quote from a newspaper article located on <http://www.olafire.com/Home.asp>.

“Astrophysical Chicago” which feels like an unfinished or continuing poem about rivers and the working class in Chicago draws from the following sources in its present form: The Eastland Disaster Historical Society (<http://www.eastlanddisaster.org/>); *The Sinking of the Eastland: America’s Forgotten Tragedy* by Jay R. Bonansinga; “Take You on a Cruise” by Interpol on *Antics*; *The Eclipses* by David Woo; *White Noise* DVD bonus features; The American Association of Electronic Voice Phenomena (<http://www.aaevp.com/>); Heraclitus; Haunted Chicago (<http://www.prairieghosts.com/eastland.html>); The Eastland Disaster: A Case of Social Amnesia? (<http://www.eastlanddisaster.org/depaulsoc1012000.htm>); Louis Zukofsky *Collected Shorter Poems*; “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking” Walt Whitman

“supermarket    tabloid    tableau” *STAR* Magazine online circa summer 2005; N\*Sync “Bye, Bye, Bye”

“sub-ode; aubade; forbid” Maurice Scully, *Livelihood*

“Map of the Hydrogen World” Hydrogen World Council (<http://www.hydrogen.co.uk/hwc/hwc.htm>)

“Selected Nerudialectics”

Pablo Neruda, *Veinte Poemas de Amor y un Cancion de Desperado*; Bruce Nauman, “Second Poem Piece”; “Americans, especially Catholics, approve of torture” & “A victim

of torture speaks out on U.S. apathy” by Tom Carney  
([http://ncronline.org/NCR\\_Online/archives2/2006a/032406/032406h.htm](http://ncronline.org/NCR_Online/archives2/2006a/032406/032406h.htm)); Air Force  
Link: Factsheets (<http://www.af.mil/factsheets/factsheet.asp?fsID=122>); “Last Balkan  
Tango” by Richard Byrne, *The Globalist*  
(<http://www.theglobalist.com/DBWeb/StoryId.aspx?StoryId=3904>);  
*The Dada Painters and Poets*, Robert Motherwell, ed.; “Food Idiosyncracies: Beetroot  
and Asparagus,” S.C. Mitchell  
(<http://dmd.aspetjournals.org/cgi/content/full/29/4/539>); “Milosevic’s Yugoslavia”  
([http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/static/in\\_depth/europe/2000/milosevic\\_yugoslavia/default.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/static/in_depth/europe/2000/milosevic_yugoslavia/default.stm))

“Gun Variation” merges the concept of Bruce Nauman’s “Poem Pieces” and revises lyrics  
from The Roots’ “Guns are Drawn” from *The Tipping Point*

“Diptych” uses a passage from J. Ronald Oakley’s *God’s Country: America in the Fifties*  
found in a critical edition of Arthur Miller’s *The Crucible*.

“Diptych: Paleo-Balkan Substratum” uses language from poems of Jean Valentine read  
at Columbia College, April 19, 2006.